

DTS and CTO Interaction

Reservation Process Guide

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Revision History

Revision No.	Date	Author	Revision/Change Description	Chapter
1.0	8/6/15	Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO)	New	All Chapters

Section 1: Introduction

Moving official DoD travelers from point A to point B is a complicated business. One of the keys that simplify the travel process is solid communications between the Commercial Travel Office (CTO) and personnel who work with the Defense Travel System (DTS). We created this guide to help improve such communications. The content is targeted to travelers, Authorizing Officials (AOs), and Defense Travel Administrators (DTAs), but the material will also be useful to anyone who wants or needs to know a little more about how the CTO and DTS interact to create travel reservations.

For the rest of this guide, “you” are the person engaged in communications with the CTO, regardless of your actual role in DTS – e.g., traveler, AO, DTA, etc.

Before you call the CTO, however, you must know your local policies regarding CTO contact. Some organizations prefer to have all CTO contact go through a single individual, such as the Lead DTA, or a group, like a help desk. Do not contact the CTO directly if doing so would break local policy.

Finally, although not required, some familiarity with how travel documents are processed in DTS will be helpful to understand the material in this guide.

Section 2: Important Concepts

One common communications roadblock is the difference between CTO and DTS terminology. CTOs have been making travel arrangements since long before DTS was even conceived. More importantly, when DTS was launched, no effort was made to match the system's terminology to the language the CTO had been using for years. To make matters worse, CTOs do not have access to DTS, meaning you will cause unnecessary confusion if you use DTS terminology when communicating with the CTO. For best results, use words the CTO understands. Table 2-1 contains some examples of the linguistic differences between DTS and the CTO.

Table 2-1: Crosswalk of DTS and CTO Terminology

CTO Terminology vs. DTS Terminology		
DTS Terminology	CTO Terminology	Meaning
CTO SUBMIT (stamp)	Inbound or CTO Queue	The CTO received and is electronically quality checking the traveler's reservation requests.
CTO BOOKED (stamp)	Outbound or Polling Queue	The CTO finished the electronic quality check and booked the traveler's reservations.
CTO TICKETED (stamp)	Ticketing Queue	The CTO issued electronic tickets for the traveler's air reservations.
CANCELLED (stamp)	Cancellation Queue	The trip has been cancelled, and the CTO must remove all reservation requests and actual reservations.
VOCO, last-minute travel	Urgent Queue	The Commanding Officer authorized the trip at short-notice and with no supporting paperwork.
DTS/CTO Confirmation Number	PNR* Locator	An alphanumeric code that identifies the file containing the traveler's reservations and reservation requests.
Send PNR**	Sweep PNR**	Refers to the process whereby DTS and the CTO are alternately able to access the PNR.

*Passenger name record – more on this in section 2.1.

** Despite what this sounds like, the PNR doesn't actually get sent or swept. See section 2.1 for more.

2.1 Passenger Name Record and Global Distribution System

All electronic communication between DTS and the CTO takes place through an electronic record called the "Passenger Name Record" (PNR). The PNR contains all the pertinent information about the traveler's reservation requests, and resides permanently in the CTO's database, which is known as a "Global Distribution System" (GDS).

The PNR is created when a traveler selects their first reservation in DTS. It is updated every time the reservation information changes – for example, when a traveler selects a new reservation or changes an existing reservation, or when the CTO adds ticket information.

DTS and the CTO each access the PNR to update or access information about reservations or reservation requests as needed. See Figure 2-1. This action is known as “sweeping” or “sending” the PNR.

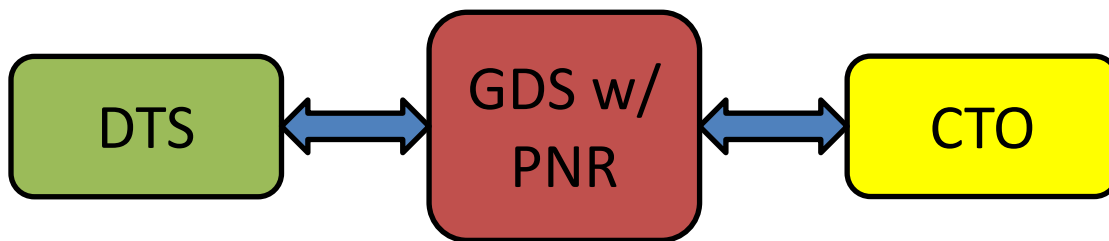


Figure 2-1 – Interaction between DTS, CTO, and GDS/PNR

Information in the PNR includes, but is not limited to:

- Pertinent DTS profile information such as the traveler’s name and contact information
- The traveler’s projected itinerary
- Requested reservations and estimated costs
- The method of payment; typically one of the following:
 - Traveler’s government travel charge card (GTCC)
 - Unit’s centrally billed account (CBA) information
- Additional information provided by the traveler, e.g., via a CTO assistance request

The PNR does NOT contain information such as:

- DTS screen names or formats
- DTS on-screen tools or entry fields
- People on the routing list
- Miscellaneous reimbursable expenses
- Additional Authorizations (e.g., Variations Authorized)
- Justifications to the AO
- Document history, including comments to the AO

The actual PNR is formatted as shown in Table 2-2 (next page). You likely can’t read it – at least not all of it. Fortunately, you don’t need to read it, since you will probably never see it. We only include it to bring home the point that referencing DTS screens and identification terms is pointless when discussing reservations with the CTO.

Table 2-2: PNR Example

PNR Information	What Does It Mean?
1.1TRAVELER/JOE	Traveler's name
1 AA1107Y 01FEB DCADFW HK1 600A 830A/ E	Outbound flight request
2 CAR ET 01FEB HK1 DFW/02FEB/CCAR/ARR-830A/RET-0230P/RG-USD30.00 UNL DY XD22.00 UNL/BS-22972246 /RC-DTS /CF-123456789	Rental car request
3 HHL BW HK1 DAL IN 01FEB OUT 02FEB 1NT 54847 BW /BW DALLAS 95.00USD/ AGT1234567/TRAVELER JOE/SI-CF-12345	Hotel request
4 AA2534 02FEB DFWDCA HK1 425P 810P / E	Return flight request
W#FLIGHT NUMBER AA1107 DCA-DFW 02/01/10	Request for CTO assistance booking flights
W#SEAT PREF 25D	
W#FLIGHT NUMBER AA2534 DFW-DCA 02/02/10	
W#SEAT PREF 20C	
W#COMMENTS CTO PLEASE ASSIST WITH BOOKING	Additional rental car info
X#CAR SEGMENT ET CCAR DFW 02/01/10 - 02/02/10	
Y#LODGING SEGMENT 02/01/10 THRU 02/02/10	Additional lodging info
Y#BW54847	
Y#DOUBLE BEDS NONSMOK	

Notice the special requests in the W, X, and Y lines. The CTO can easily overlook such requests, especially in a very long PNR. The good news is that if a special request is overlooked, a quick call to the CTO will bring the fact to their attention, so they can correct the situation. You should also understand that the CTO is not responsible for ensuring that the vendor satisfies such special requests. They merely make sure that the vendor receives them. Each vendor must decide whether or not they can comply with the traveler's request.

When communicating with the CTO about the PNR, the most important piece of information is the PNR identifier. Here's how to find it in DTS:

1. Open the DTS authorization and select **Travel** > **Summary**. The Trip Summary screen opens.
2. Select the **Final Trip Itinerary** tab and look for the **DTS/CTO Confirmation** number.

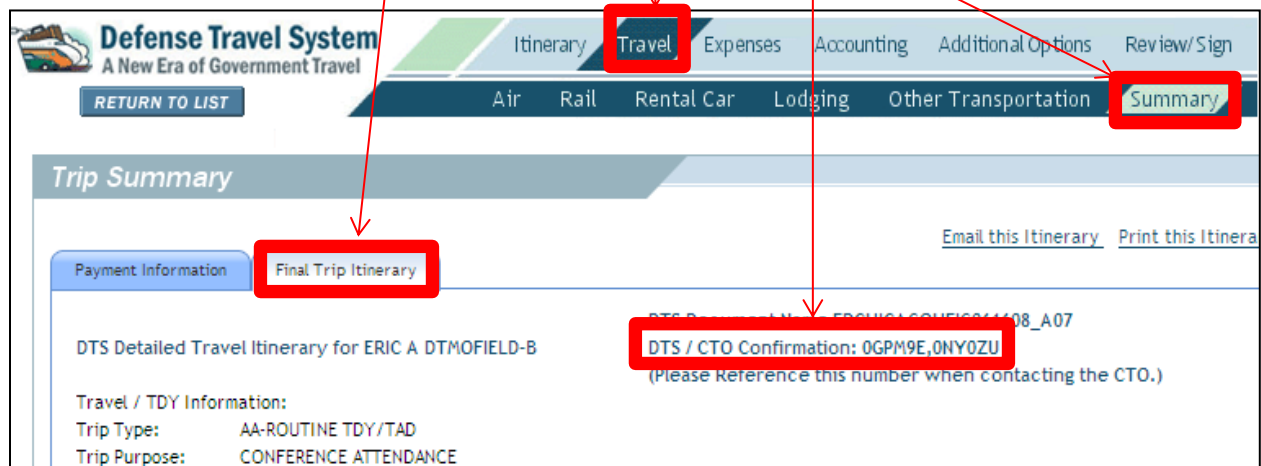


Figure 2-2 – Find the PNR Locator in DTS

Quoting that number to the CTO enables them to find the PNR and gain access to the traveler's reservation information. However, going back to the terminology listed in Table 2-1, remember that when you talk to the CTO, you should call it the "PNR locator" or simply the "PNR" so the CTO understands exactly what you mean.

Be aware that sometimes (as in the example in Figure 2-2) two numbers appear. This simply means that the reservations are tied to two different PNRs simultaneously. Having two PNRs is not a problem, but you must give the CTO both numbers to prevent mistakes that may cause the document to lock.

2.2 Ticketing Date

The tickets-are-waiting (TAW) date – a.k.a., the ticketing date – is the day the CTO is allowed to issue tickets on booked reservations. The TAW date is usually 3 business days before travel is due to start. Of course, the organization can request early ticketing, if required by the mission.

DTS adds the TAW to the PNR when the AO stamps the authorization APPROVED. If the AO does not approve the authorization, the CTO cannot issue tickets. This can lead to unaware travelers showing up that at the airport without tickets. Don't let this happen.

- If you are a traveler, check your authorization's document history screen (**Review/Sign > Digital Signature** regularly to make sure everything is going according to plan:
 - Look for the APPROVED stamp well before the TAW date.
 - Look for CTO TICKETED after the TAW date.
 - Contact the AO, DTA, or help desk if a stamp fails to appear in a timely manner.
- If you are a DTA, run the **Pending Airline Cancellation Report** frequently. Contact the AO if a document is not approved, or the CTO, help desk, or TAC if the AO has approved the document but the CTO has not ticketed the reservations.

Document History				
Status	Date	Time	Name	Remarks
CREATED	07/25/14	0956	Eric T West	
SIGNED	07/25/14	1008	Eric T West	
CTO SUBMIT	07/25/14	1008	Eric T West	
CTO BOOKED	07/25/14	1008	Eric T West	
APPROVED	07/25/14	1009	Chris A West	

Figure 2-2 – APPROVED stamp in DTS

Section 3: DTS/CTO Reservations Process

This section will clarify how both systems (DTS and the CTO) interact with the PNR, how actions by various people trigger certain actions, and how both systems keep everyone informed about what's going on. Table 3-1 shows all the major steps involved in the process of making reservations in DTS, through a CTO. More detail is provided in the pages that follow.

As explained in Section 2, DTS and the CTO both access the GDS (where the PNR is stored) to obtain, record, or update information during the reservations process. This type of access by alternate entities is known as “sending” or “sweeping” the PNR, although the document doesn't actually go anywhere.

Table 3-1: Simplified DTS/CTO Reservations Process

Step	Action	Effect on PNR	DTS Stamp	Email
1	Traveler selects first reservation	Created	None	No
2	Traveler alters a reservation	Updated	None	No
3	Traveler completes authorization	None	SIGNED	No
4	CTO receives reservation requests	To CTO inbound queue	CTO SUBMIT	No
5	CTO books reservations	To CTO outbound queue	CTO BOOKED	Yes
6	AO approves travel	Updated	APPROVED	Yes
7	CTO issues tickets	Updated	CTO TICKETED	Yes

3.1 Step 1: Traveler Selects First Reservation

Selecting the first reservation in the DTS Travel module creates a PNR and immediately enters the selected reservation into it. This puts the reservation “on hold” – meaning a plane seat, hotel room, or rental car is set aside for the traveler. While the reservation remains on hold, nobody else can select it, though it is not yet booked or ticketed.

Since this activity takes place while the traveler is still creating the authorization, DTS does not apply any stamps, and neither the CTO nor DTS send any emails.

3.2 Step 2: Traveler Alters a Reservation

“Alters” includes selecting more reservations, cancelling existing reservations, replacing reservations with others, and more. These actions all occur in the DTS Travel module, so they behave almost exactly like the reservations in step one. That is, they trigger no DTS stamps or emails, but they do create a reservation that is placed on hold. Each alteration updates the PNR.

The PNR may be updated quite a few times while the traveler goes through the process of building the authorization and during subsequent trip planning.

3.3 Step 3: Traveler Completes Authorization

After finishing making reservations and entering all other necessary information, the traveler must apply the SIGNED stamp to complete the authorization. The SIGNED stamp triggers DTS to start electronically routing the document to the travel experts listed on the routing list. If the authorization includes reservations, the first stop is the CTO.

Note: If the traveler makes any reservation changes between the time they sign the authorization and the trip start date, they must re-sign the document to restart the routing process and send the updated PNR to the CTO.

3.4 Step 4: CTO Receives Reservation Requests

For authorizations that include reservation requests, applying the SIGNED stamp triggers several actions:

- The PNR is swept to the CTO's "inbound queue"
- DTS applies the CTO SUBMIT stamp
- The document becomes temporarily "view-only" in DTS

When the authorization arrives in the inbound queue, the CTO performs an electronic quality control check of the reservation requests. Some CTO contracts also allow the CTO to conduct a check for alternate flights if the traveler's request includes flights that are not Government contracted airfares.

3.5 Step 5: CTO Books Reservations

Within one business day, the CTO books the reservations, including any special requests the traveler made. From this point, the traveler has guaranteed reservations, though the CTO has neither charged the traveler nor issued tickets.

The act of booking reservations causes several actions to occur automatically:

- The PNR is swept to the CTO's "outbound queue"
- The document once again becomes editable DTS
- DTS applies the CTO BOOKED stamp
- The CTO sends the traveler an email that includes the trip itinerary.
- DTS sends the traveler an email that includes:
 - The trip itinerary
 - Comments from the CTO
 - The document's current status – CTO BOOKED, and actively routing
 - Instructions on how to access the document in DTS

3.6 Step 6: AO Approves Travel

The last person in the local routing process is always the AO. AO approval triggers DTS to do several things automatically:

- Update the PNR to attach the tickets-are-waiting (TAW) date
- Apply the APPROVED stamp
- Send the traveler an email with the document's new status – APPROVED

Note: Until the traveler receives this email, the traveler must assume the AO has not yet approved the authorization. The AO must approve the authorization before the traveler may travel.

3.7 Step 7: CTO Issues Tickets

On the TAW date, the CTO issues electronic tickets, unless the mission demands paper tickets or the organization has requested early ticketing. Ticket issuance triggers several actions:

- The CTO updates the PNR with ticket information and applicable fees
- The traveler's GTCC or the unit's CBA is debited
- DTS updates the authorization with the new PNR information
- DTS applies CTO TICKETED stamp (see Figure 3-1)
- DTS sends the traveler an email that includes:
 - Basic itinerary information
 - CTO comments
 - The document's current status – CTO TICKETED
- The CTO sends the traveler an email that contains:
 - The payment invoice
 - A more complete version of the itinerary
 - The ticket numbers and costs
 - After-hours emergency contact information
 - And much more

Since the trip has been both approved and ticketed, the traveler may go to the airport and will be able to travel.

Document History				
Status	Date	Time	Name	Remarks
CTO TICKETED	06/02/10	1431	CTO	
ADJUSTED	06/02/10	1431	CTO	Auto generation - no adjust comments entered.
CREATED	06/02/10	1431	CTO	

Figure 3-1 – CTO TICKETED stamp in DTS

Chapter 4: Best Practices

Now you know how the reservations and ticketing process should work. Here are some suggestions to help ensure things go as smoothly as possible, based on your role.

4.1 Monitor Document Status in DTS (Traveler, Clerk, NDEA, AO)

As a traveler, travel clerk, Non-DTS Entry Agent (NDEA), or AO, you should closely monitor each active document that concerns you. Check its status in DTS at least weekly to ensure it is routing in a timely manner. Do not hesitate to take action if you notice unusual delays. For instance, alert a slow Routing Official or call the local help desk or Travel Assistance Center (TAC).

*Before you contact the TAC, be aware of your local policies on this matter. Some organizations have rules about who may contact the TAC.

4.2 Run Tracking Reports Weekly (DTA)

As a DTA, you should run the following reports each week to spot documents that are not processing as they should:

- The Routing Status report identifies all documents currently in routing, along with their current status, awaiting status, and the amount of time they have been waiting.
- The Pending Airline Cancellation report identifies all documents that been stamped CTO BOOKED, but not APPROVED. You can limit this search by a number of hours before the trip start time to spot documents for imminent trips.

4.3 Watch Your Email (Traveler)

As a traveler, monitor your email. Let the AO, DTA, TAC, or CTO know if you don't receive an email from the CTO with ticketing information by the TAW date. Do this as soon as possible to allow time for troubleshooting.

4.4 Don't Go to the Airport without A Ticket (Traveler)

You should never go to the airport before you receive confirmation of ticketing (see Figure 3-1). The most likely cause of a failure to ticket is the AO failing to approve the authorization. Without AO approval, you may not travel!

4.5 Keep DTS Profiles Up-To-Date (Traveler, DTA)

DTS updates the PNR with information from the traveler's DTS profile. The two most important items, from the CTO's perspective, are:

- Government travel charge card (GTCC) data: Few things will cause travel to grind to a halt faster than bad GTCC information. Without it, the GTCC vendor will decline a purchase, meaning the CTO cannot book reservations.
- Traveler contact information: Should the CTO have to contact the traveler, for instance, if a card is declined or to confirm some aspect of the traveler's reservation requests, they must have the most current information.

4.6 Activate Your GTCC (Traveler)

As soon as you receive a new GTCC, call the number on the label on the front of the card to activate it. The CTO will reject a card that is not activated.

4.7 Decide Whether Or Not to Contact the CTO (Traveler)

As a traveler, when travel plans change, you must decide whether to contact the CTO or not. This means weighing the potential help the CTO can provide against the extra cost of requesting that assistance. Most CTO contracts have two CTO pricing levels – a lower fee when the CTO can use strictly electronic processes, and a higher fee when more personal assistance is required. Of course, each situation must be judged on its own merits, but here are a few general rules.

Do not hesitate to contact the CTO when:

- An emergency or mission requirement demands short-notice travel (aka, "verbal orders of the Commanding Officer [VOCO])
- Changes are required while official travel is in progress
- You need to return any unused paper tickets

Think twice about calling the CTO:

- To request pre-travel reservation changes – that's what the DTS Travel module is for
- When you are having trouble with DTS – remember the CTO doesn't have access to the system; instead, try:
 - Finding an answer through resources such as DTS help screens, the [DTMO website](#), the [Travel Explorer](#) (TraX) FAQs or Knowledge Center
 - Getting advice from your local help desk, DTA, AO, or other experienced travelers
 - Contacting the TAC

Chapter 5: Common Problems and Their Solutions

Unfortunately, despite everyone's best efforts, sometimes things still go awry. Let's take a look at some of common problems and what you can do to avoid them or fix them as quickly as possible.

5.1 Document Stuck at CTO SUBMIT

A document that is routing properly should change status from CTO SUBMIT to CTO BOOKED in less than 24 hours. If the document status remains at CTO SUBMIT for more than 24 hours, the document is considered "stuck".

There are many reasons a document may get stuck at CTO SUBMIT. Some of them are CTO issues; others are DTS issues. Either way, contacting the TAC should quickly sort this out for you, as the TAC has access to both sides of the problem (DTS and CTO systems).

5.2 Seats Not Available

Occasionally DTS displays a seat map with no selectable seats. One contributing factor to this problem is the fact that most airlines offer seat selection on a "first come, first served" basis, and demand is high. If you don't see an available seat, don't panic. If the flight is listed in DTS, at least one seat is available, even if you can't see it. Every airline restricts a certain number of seats from pre-flight selection. Some of the more common pre-flight selection restrictions are:

- Emergency row seats
- Seats reserved for frequent flyers
- Seats reserved for people who purchase tickets at the airport

The combination of pre-flight seat restrictions and high traveler demand can make pre-flight seat assignments difficult to obtain. However, the airline can confirm a flight reservation even without a specific seat assignment.

In order to increase your odds of getting your seat of choice, try to:

- Book as early as possible – booking early increases your chances of getting a reserved seat.
- Use the DTS seat selector, if available, to find an available seat then call the airline to reserve it. Be advised – the airline may charge a fee for this service; that fee is not reimbursable.
- Join the airline's frequent flyer program. Doing so will allow you to take advantage of seats reserved for that class of traveler.
- Take advantage of early online check-in. You can usually select a seat when you check in.
- Check in early at the airport early on travel day – arriving early increases your odds of getting the seat of your choice.

5.3 Duplicate Bookings

Never make duplicate air bookings. Airlines do not allow travelers to hold multiple reservations to the same destination on the same day. Sometimes travelers re-book flights hoping to get a better price or book flights on multiple routes in case one should be cancelled. To some, such actions may seem like prudent planning, but to the airline, the traveler is tying up a seat they can't use and the airlines cannot sell.

Restrictions against duplicate bookings apply even if the reservations are made in different travel classes or by different methods, such as booking online then calling the CTO or the airline. The restriction even applies if the bookings are on different flights.

Duplicate bookings waste time and money. When you make duplicate bookings the airline will:

- Cancel all your reservations. Someone must then re-book the cancelled reservations – and you may find that your preferred flights are no longer available.
- Fine the CTO. In most cases the CTO will pass responsibility for paying the fine to the DoD Component that made the duplicate booking.

Of course, duplicate booking is not strictly an airline issue. Other travel and transportation (bus, rail, hotel) vendors have similar rules:

- Many transportation vendors charge for all booked tickets, whether you actually use the seat or not.
- Most lodging providers charge a “no show” fee for the first night of the duplicate booking before cancelling any remaining nights.

Remember that DTS is a “book as you go” system, meaning that a reservation is held as soon as you select it. It is booked even if the AO never approves the authorization. In other words, creating duplicate authorizations may well lead to duplicate reservations as well. Unless the TAC instructs you to do so, never create duplicate authorizations in DTS:

- Never use DTS to as a practice or estimation tool; only use the system to create real travel documents. Use practice tools, such as the Enterprise Web Training System (EWTS)*, or trip estimation tools, like the Trip Tools module in TraX, for training/estimation purposes.
- If you need to replace one reservation with another, use the DTS “replace” function as a first choice. If you can't use that function, remove the reservation you don't need before adding the new one. If you need to replace the entire authorization, cancel all reservations on the old authorization before creating the new one.

* EWTS is a very robust DTS simulator built specifically to provide DTS training in a threat-free environment. You can use EWTS all day long without making any real reservations. For more information on how to access and use EWTS, attend distance learning class, D-205, EWTS Setup and Application.

To prevent duplicate bookings in a single authorization:

- Never ask the CTO to make reservations that already exist in DTS. If you call the CTO to replace reservations made in DTS, let the CTO know about them, so they do not make duplicate reservations by accident.
- Of course, the reverse is also true: never book reservations in DTS after making arrangements outside DTS (e.g., through the CTO or calling a provider directly).
- When creating a new DTS authorization, on the Itinerary creation screen (Figure 5-1), select options that skip reservations you made (or will make) outside DTS:
 - To skip flight reservations, select the **Other** radio button in Section B.
 - To skip rental car reservations, do not select the **Rental Car** checkbox in Section D.
 - To skip lodging reservations, do not select the **Lodging** checkbox in Section D.

Figure 5-1 – Itinerary Creation Screen in DTS

For more information on how to manage reservations in DTS, take our document processing distance learning or web based training classes. All are available through TraX.

5.4 Over-claiming Reimbursement for Reservations

When you make reservations in DTS, the system automatically incorporates them into the travel cost estimate. This cost is also automatically added to the voucher, when you create it. In other words, if you make reservations in DTS, do not follow up by manually making a duplicate claim for the same reservations. Doing so will result in duplicate payments and will probably leave you owing money to the Government.

Briefly, the process for claiming the cost of reservations purchased outside DTS is as follows:

- Claim any ticketed transportation costs (air, bus, rail, etc.) on the Other Trans. screen. Access it by selecting **Travel > Other Transportation**. (Figure 5-2)
- Claim lodging costs on the Per Diem Entitlements Detail screen. Access it by selecting **Expenses > Per Diem Entitlements**, then selecting any **edit** link. (Figure 5-3)
- Claim rental car costs on the Non-Mileage Expenses screen. Access it by selecting **Expenses > Non-Mileage**, and entering the cost as a **Commercial Auto** expense. (Figure 5-4)

Again, for more detail about the above screen, attend a distance learning or web based training class on document processing. And only use them if you made reservations through some means besides DTS.

Defense Travel System
A New Era of Government Travel

RETURN TO LIST

Itinerary **Travel** Expenses Accounting Additional Options Review/Sign

Air Rail Rental Car Lodging **Other Transportation** Summary

Other Trans.

Use this screen to enter Other Ticketed Transportation information.

DoD mandates split disbursement for transportation, lodging and rental car expenses. [Click here for memorandum](#)

ADD Ticket Information

Enter or select the required data.

Please Note: A Red Star (*) indicates a field is required.

* Type: --Select--

* Description:

* Ticket No: See Attached Ticket 3

Trip Summary

Overall Starting Point

Leave From:	Warrenton,VA	Edit
Leave:	04-Nov-14	

Location 1: OKLAHOMA CITY,OK

Leave From:	Warrenton,VA	Edit
TDY/TAD Loc:	OKLAHOMA CITY,OK	
Arrive:	04-Nov-14	
Leave:	07-Nov-14	
Carrier/Flight:	United Airlines (UA) 5214	Edit
Conf/PNR:	123456	
Depart:	04-Nov-14 05:35AM	
	IAD-Washington Dulles International Apt	
Arrive:	04-Nov-14 07:56AM	
	IAH-Houston George Bush	

Figure 5-2 – Add Ticketed Transportation Costs in DTS

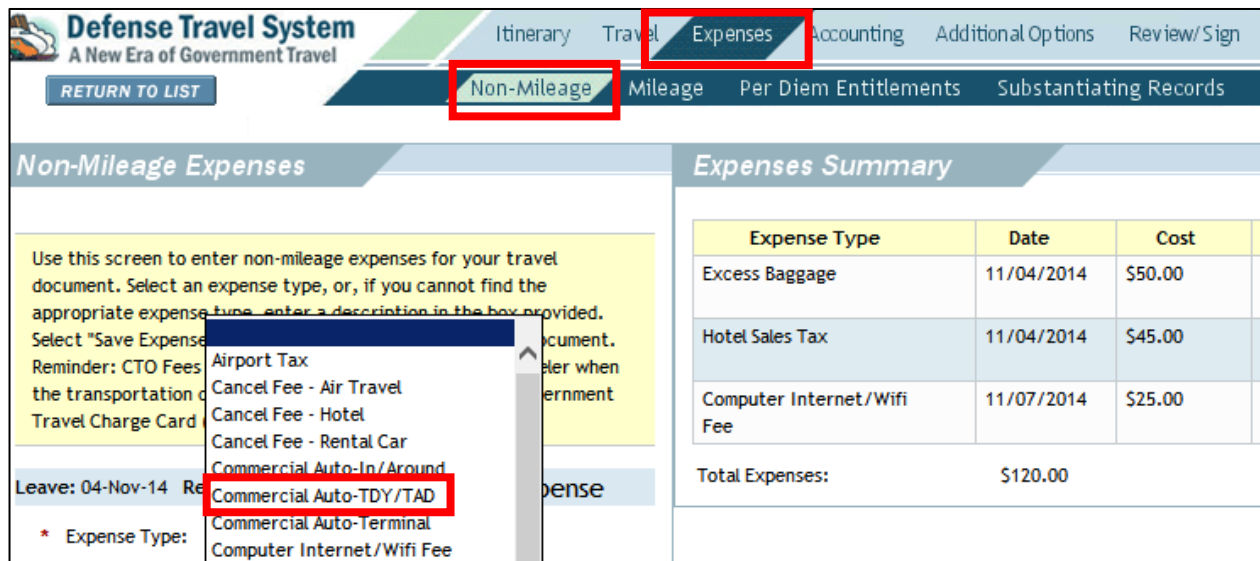


Figure 5-4 – Add Rental Car Costs in DTS

See section 5.3 for more information on two more situations that lead to churning:

- Creating authorizations in DTS for practice

- Using DTS to research flight costs or travel schedules
- Creating authorizations in DTS for practice

5.6 Reservation Auto Cancellation

DTS certainly helps simplify the process of making travel reservations. However, to prevent prospective DoD travelers from holding reservations that they aren't going to use, reservations are automatically cancelled when certain criteria aren't met.

1. Whenever a traveler exits the DTS Travel module, DTS posts a warning that the system will cancel all changes to flight, hotel, and rental car reservations if the traveler does not stamp the authorization SIGNED within 24 hours. The traveler must re-create all cancelled reservations. This is called "churning," a poor business practice that is covered in Section 5.5. To prevent the system cancelling reservations, all the traveler needs to do is ... you guessed it ... sign the authorization within 24 hours. Yes, it really is that simple.
2. If a trip remains unticketed 72 hours* before the scheduled departure time, the airline may cancel all flight reservations in order to sell them to someone who is able to travel. Most such cancellations occur because the AO did not stamp the authorization APPROVED, or because the document is stuck at CTO SUBMIT (see Section 5.2 for more on stuck at CTO SUBMIT, and Section 2.2 for how to check whether the CTO has ticketed the flight).

*Cancellation timing for reservations initially made less than 72 hours before departure time is set by each airline's unique policy.

5.7 Use of Restricted Airfares

This "problem" isn't actually a problem in and of itself. It's actually an allowed alternative if done properly. The problem is that it is rarely done properly.

For starters, DoD travel policy directs, as the traveler's first choice, the use of:

- Government contract (aka, "City Pair") fares
- Unrestricted fares

DTS only offers unrestricted airfares, some of which are City Pair airfares, making it easy to follow this policy. However, in an effort to save travel dollars, policy allows the use of restricted airfares, which can be much less expensive. Per policy, to correctly take advantage of such airfares:

- The traveler must book the fare through the CTO. The traveler must not use alternate methods such as booking directly through the airline or by using any of the myriad non-CTO-owned online booking services.
- The AO must fill out and retain the "Restricted Airfare Checklist for AOs" in JTR, Appendix H. Using the checklist ensures they sufficiently consider the ramifications of allowing the use of the restricted airfare. Some of those ramifications are potential:
 - Flight change or cancellation fees should the mission change
 - Ticket transfer fees should the traveler change
 - Minimum stay requirements or blackout dates

- Advance purchase requirements or short notice travel restrictions
- Reservation cancellations if trips aren't approved or if tickets aren't purchased or used per arbitrary timeliness requirements
- Negative impact on the DoD's ability to negotiate lower fares based on high travel volume

Chapter 6: Support Resources for CTO Issues

Unfortunately, even if you implement all the best preventive measures and best practices, and even if you use the best troubleshooting techniques you know, things may still go wrong that you cannot fix. Should the worst happen, it's nice to know who you can contact for help.

In addition to the assets mentioned earlier, such as the Travel Assistance Center and the Travel Explorer website, you should be familiar with your supporting help desk. The help desk is a tremendous tool that can answer questions even the TAC and TraX cannot, such as your local policies and issues specific to your site.

In addition, another source is available to help out when needed. The Quality Assurance Evaluator (QAE) or Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) – different titles for the same role – is your site communications liaison between the Government and a private contractor, such as the CTO. If you need to verify some aspect of your CTO contract or need someone to intervene directly with the CTO, the QAE/COTR is the one to do it.

QAE/COTR positions are filled locally, so contact your local chain of command if you need to solicit their assistance.

Appendix A: Acronyms

AO	Authorizing Official
CBA	Centrally Billed Account
COTR	Contracting Officer Technical Representative
CTO	Commercial Travel Office
DoD	Department of Defense
DTA	Defense Travel Administrator
DTMO	Defense Travel Management Office
DTS	Defense Travel System
EWTS	Enterprise Web Training System
GDS	Global Distribution System
GTCC	Government Travel Charge Card
NDEA	Non-DTS Entry Agent
PNR	Passenger Name Record
QAE	Quality Assurance Evaluator
TAC	Travel Assistance Center
TAW	Tickets Are Waiting
TraX	Travel Explorer
VOCO	Verbal Orders of the Commanding Officer